9:Fosbrooke G-5 (1936-1948) 1948 FL12 Masai FL12
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An Administrative Survey of the Masai Social System

By H. A. Fosbrooke

PREFACE.

The accompanying notes do not presume to give a balanced picture of the Masai social system. They were compiled in 1939 when the writer, after 4 years' service in the Masai District of Tanganyika was seconded to study the political system and to submit proposals on administrative reorganisation. These latter are omitted from the present publication, but the chapters on History, the Laibon, the Age Grade System, the Tribal Officials, and Clan and Family matters are presented in that order and in practically the same form as when originally submitted, and consequently refer to the position as it existed in 1939. This introduction and the conclusion are being written in 1948.

By reason of its origins this material has a heavy bias on the political side of the social organization; the purely social — birth, marriage and death customs — and the socio-economic — the cattle culture, land usage, etc. — leave a large field of interesting material for future study. It is hoped that one result of the publication of these notes will be to stimulate those at present serving in Masailand in whatever capacity, in both Kenya and Tanganyika, to take up these untouched branches of study in addition to correcting, bringing up-to-date and noting local divergences in this and other published material.

The Masai are known, by reputation or repute. to the majority of those into whose hands the present publication will fall. Here it will suffice to say that they are a race of semi-nomadic pastoralists, of Nilo-Hamitic stock, occupying a large area of country on both sides of the Kenya-Tanganyika border. The census due to take place this month will reveal their true numbers, and perhaps the editor of Notes and Records will be in a position to quote an accurate figure before this appears in print. But the whole tribe probably does not exceed 25,000 adult males or 100,000 persons in all.* It has been frequently pointed out by its critics that the tribe occupied more land and has played a more important part in history than is justified by its numbers, but the same remarks apply to many strong-charactered and virile races.

To illustrate this paper some of the numerous photographs which I took during my sojourn in Masailand are reproduced, though they have perhaps suffered through time and inadequate storage; in addition those interested will find that the works marked in the bibliography with an asterisk give an adequate pictorial representation of Masai life. And finally 400 feet of 16 mm. ciné film, kindly edited and 'duped' by the Colonial Film Unit, has been deposited with the Information Officer, Dar-es-Salaam, from whom it may be obtained on loan. Of particular interest are shots

* The Director of Statistics, E.A. High Commission, has kindly supplied the following preliminary estimate figures of the Census enumeration: Total number of Masai in the Masai districts of Kenya and Tanganyika — 107,309, of which 54,535 are males.—Ed.

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of ceremonial dances taken during the Jubilee Celebrations of King George V in 1935, and of water drawing from the deep pre-historic wells of Central Masailand.

A word about Masai terms; throughout clarity rather than pedantic accuracy has been the aim. Thus the anglicized "Laibon" has been used for ol *Oiboni*, "Unoto" for *e Unoto*, "Laiser" for *'l Aiser*, etc., i.e. the article has been retained or dropped as the occasion demands. Where the plural forms have become current in local administrative usage, e.g. Laigwanak, they have been retained, but in other cases their employment would merely have led to confusion. When anglicized or in common use, these terms have been left in standard print: when italicized the word or phrase is, as far as known, grammatically correct.

Finally, it was thought undesirable to burden the report with frequent references and footnotes. A list of the works consulted is appended.

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An Administrative and Political History of the Masai Reserve. — G. R. Sandford. London, 1919.

Notes on Marriage Customs among the Masai. — D. Storrs-Fox. Journal of the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society. Nos. 42-45, pp. 183-192.

Masai Social Customs. — L. E. Whitehouse. Journal of the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society, Nos. 47-48, p. 146.

The Masai Penal Code. — R. A. Maguire. Journal of the Royal Africa Society, October, 1928, pp. 12-18.

Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony. — L. S. B. Leakey. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. LX, 1930, pp. 185-209. (A further paper by Mr. Storrs-Fox, published in a subsequent number of the J.R.A.I., amplifies Dr. Leakey's paper).

• A Day in the Life of the Masai. — H. A. Fosbrooke. East African Annual, 1935-36, pp. 119 ff.

• Masai Place Names. — D. J. Fosbrooke. East African Annual, 1945-46, pp. 95 ff.

Peasantry or Prosperity.—Colin Maher. East African Problems No. 3.

SECTION I. — HISTORY.

A. Early History: the Exodus — origin of the Laibonok — southward penetration — consolidation in Tanganyika under Subet — origin of the Lumbwa or Kwavi — limit of expansion — dispossessed tribes — archaeological evidence.

The Masai are generally regarded as coming from Nilo-Hamitic stock. From the known history of other tribes, and a comparison of various cultures with that of the Masai, it is believed that, some four hundred

• Fully illustrated.

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These figures were obtained by reading through tax registers to groups of elders, who supplied the information. The number of wives showing in the registers were not revealed to them, and it was noted that in many cases the numbers given by the elders exceded those recorded in the books.

The percentages to be drawn from this table are of special interest when compared with another tribe. For this reason they are tabulated below, in conjunction with those of the Hehe, figures from Brown and Hutt's 'Anthropology in Action', page 107.

Marriage Statistics.

	MASAI	*HEHE*
Unmarried men	42.2%	25.3%) of adult
Men with one wife	33.1%	46.4%) male
Men with two or more wives ...	22.7%	28.3%) population.
Wives for every 100 married men ...	161	153

Two points of interest arise from these figures. The first is the much larger proportion of unmarried men amongst the Masai. These fall mainly in the warrior class, as the following table shows :—

Marriage of Moran.

	Kibaya	*Samatwa*	*Engas-umet*	*Longido*	*Total*
Total moran	123	159	66	234	582
Total married moran	17	23	20	85	145
Percentage married	13.8%	14.5%	30.3%	36.3%	28.0%

The other interesting point is that one would expect both the percentage of polygamous marriages to total marriages, and the number of married women per 100 men to be much higher in the case of the Masai than the figures actually reveal. The reason for this lies in the number of dependent women not classified by the Masai as wives. The first table shows that for 999 adult males there are only 900 wives; but census figures show a preponderance of females over males, and the 999 males probably represent at least 1,200 adult females, the balance being made up by mothers (with husbands still alive) living with their moran sons, deceased brothers' wives with male issue, (not therefore taken to wife), etc.

In one area the distribution of the women (wives only) amongst the ages was worked out; it was found that there were approximately 2 wives to every Dwati, 1.5 to every Dareto and 0.3 only to every Kisale.

Although it was found that on an average each gate pays only four taxes, the probability is that there are usually more than four huts to a gate, for those moran who pay tax but do not possess a hut are thought to be more than offset by those women who do possess a hut yet pay no tax. The number of cattle to each gate were examined in the Longido area, with the results shown in the table below :—

14:Orr & Gilks D-4 (no date) 1931 FL12 Masai FL12
Kikuyu FL 10

The information collected directly was supplemented by the replies to two questionnaires issued by the Medical Department to district medical officers, medical missionaries, chiefs of tribes and others interested in the investigation. One questionnaire dealt with the dietary customs of natives and the other with the incidence and etiology of ulcers.

II.—FIELD WORK.

(a) Dietary Customs and Incidence of Disease in the Kikuyu and Masai Reserves.

Dr. J. W. Foster was sent out from the Rowett Research Institute to carry out this part of the investigation, and Dr. J. C. J. Callanan, of the Medical Service in Kenya, was specially detailed to work with him for the first five months.

The two reserves chosen for the investigation were the Kikuyu and Masai, the choice being made on account of the fact that the reserves adjoin while the dietary customs of the tribes are very different, the Akikuyu * being almost exclusively vegetarian and the Masai chiefly carnivorous.

The two Reserve areas were visited alternately during a period of over a year and a half, each trip occupying two or three months. Samples of all foodstuffs in common use were collected and despatched to the Rowett Institute for analysis. The samples consisted of articles of diet in the raw state, cooked foods, edible earths, salt substitutes, and natural mineral waters used in cooking.

A physical examination was made of 6,349 Kikuyu and 1,546 Masai † adult natives of both sexes and all ages. The examination was made under eighteen heads, including stature, weight, chest, abdomen and calf measurements; presence of anæmia; condition of teeth and gums; general physical and muscular development; strength as indicated by the dynamometer; presence of hernia, splenomegaly; ulcers.

A similar examination was made of 2,500 Kikuyu and 254 Masai children. The special object of this examination was to compare the tribal incidence, during the growth period, of osseous deformities, dental caries, periodontitis, anæmia, and general signs of malnutrition.

The subjects examined for physical condition were taken at random from the healthy section of the community in all parts of the Reserves. Great care was taken to exclude any sick native who presented himself. Apart from this, no selection was made, and the records may be taken as representatives of the average native of the Reserves.

An estimation was made of the diseases prevailing in the two tribes. Hospital returns were analysed, but, as it became apparent that, for

* The prefix "A" in Akikuyu has a collective sense, the term "Akikuyu" referring to the tribe as a whole, while the term "Kikuyu" has only an adjectival significance.

† It should be noted that the estimated populations of the Kikuyu and Masai Reserves at the end of 1929 were respectively 795,934 and 48,547.

15: Margetts D-S (1958) 1963 FL12 Masai FL12

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On the Masai E-Unoto. *By Edward L. Margetts, M.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. (Specialist Psychiatrist to the Kenya government, Mathari hospital, Nairobi, 1955–9). With three text figures*

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This note will supplement Lord Claud Hamilton's recent essay on the Masai *E-unoto* ceremonies, the details of which are not fully known, let alone witnessed and understood. The chief value which can be claimed for the present article is the series of unique photographs which I was able to take of some of the ritual.

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It was my good fortune to attend, over a one day period, that part of the Masai *E-unoto* in which the sacred heifer is sacrificed and the *muran* receive the hide finger rings. The date of the ceremony was

[text continues on p. 192]

18: Merker--525 G-5 (1895-ca.1908) 1910 FL12 Masai FL12
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Appendix III.

Description and measurement of the bodies of 18 men (1)

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1. The relatively small number of men is explained by the fact that the records of 27 men were lost.

and 43 women. A. Physical description. B. Physical measurement.

A. Physical description.

For each individual the genealogy was given up to the grandparents. Where the lineage or the tribe of a person could not be given with absolute certainty, it is designated as "Masai" or "En dorobo."

The numbers accompanying the color designations refer to the corresponding numbers of the Rocca color charts.

It should also be expressly pointed out here that the striking oblique-forward position of the upper medial incisors is a natural one, not artificial.

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No. 1.

Ol oruñgoti, ♂, ca. 27 years old, a native of the steppe area Sogonoi. Lineage: El mamasita.

♂ El mamasita ♀ El ugumoi ♂ El bartimaro ♀ El masañgua

♂ ol Oruñgoti.

Fat. Soft parts firm. Skin color: forehead and cheek dark-gray--reddish-brown (28), chest somewhat darker, back of hand dark brown (43), palm of hand gray-reddish-brown (somewhat lighter than 29), scrotum black-reddish-brown (27), nipple somewhat lighter.

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[For methods of recording and collecting information, passim, see category 116, pp. 42-65, 195-220, 237-239, 297, 319-324, and 401.]